

V-Measure: A conditional entropy-based external cluster evaluation measure.

Abstract

We present V-measure, an external entropy-based cluster evaluation metric. V-measure provides an elegant solution to many problems that affect previously defined cluster evaluation measures including 1) dependence on clustering algorithm or data set, 2) the “problem of matching”, where the clustering of only a portion of data points are evaluated and 3) accurate evaluation and combination of two desirable aspects of clustering, homogeneity and completeness. We compare V-measure to a number of popular cluster evaluation measures and demonstrate that it satisfies several desirable properties of clustering solutions, using simulated clustering results. Finally, we use V-measure to evaluate two clustering tasks: document clustering and pitch accent type clustering.

1 Introduction

Clustering techniques have been used successfully for many natural language processing tasks, such as document clustering (Willett, 1988; Zamir and Etzioni, 1998; Cutting et al., 1992; Vempala and Wang, 2005), word sense disambiguation (Shin and Choi, 2004), semantic role labeling (Baldewein et al., 2004), pitch accent type disambiguation (Levow, 2006). They are particularly appealing for tasks in which there is an abundance of language data available, but manual annotation of this data is very resource-intensive. Unsupervised clustering can eliminate the need for (full) manual annotation of the data into desired classes, but often at the cost of making evaluation of success more difficult.

External evaluation metrics for clustering can be applied when class labels for each data point in some

evaluation set can be determined a priori. The clustering task is then to assign these data points to any number of clusters such that each cluster contains all and only those data points that are members of the same class. Given the ground truth class labels, it is trivial to determine whether this perfect clustering has been achieved. However, evaluating how far from perfect an incorrect clustering solution is a more difficult task (Oakes, 1998) and proposed approaches often lack rigor (Meila, 2006).

In this paper, we describe a new entropy-based external cluster evaluation measure, V-MEASURE, designed to address the problem of quantifying such imperfection. Like all external measures, V-measure compares a target clustering — e.g., a manually annotated subset of the available data — against an automatically generated clustering to determine how similar the two are. We introduce two complementary concepts, completeness and homogeneity, to capture desirable properties in clustering tasks.

We describe several popular external cluster evaluation measures in Section 2. In Section 3, we describe V-measure and how it is calculated in terms of homogeneity and completeness, as well as drawing some comparisons to existing measures. In Section 4, we discuss how some desirable properties for clustering are satisfied by V-measure vs. other metrics. In Section 5, we present two applications of V-measure, on document clustering and on pitch accent type clustering.

2 Existing Evaluation Measures

Clustering algorithms divide an input data set into a number of partitions, or clusters. For tasks where some target partition can be defined for testing purposes, we define a “clustering solution” as a mapping from each data point to its cluster assignments in both the target and hypothesized clustering. In the context of this discussion, we will refer to the target

partitions, or clusters, as CLASSES, referring only to hypothesized clusters as CLUSTERS.

To discuss existing cluster evaluation measures we introduce two criteria for a clustering solution: homogeneity and completeness. A clustering result satisfies homogeneity if all of its clusters contain only data points which are members of a single class. A clustering result satisfies completeness if all the data points that are members of a given class are elements of the same cluster. The homogeneity and completeness of a clustering solution run roughly in opposition: Increasing the homogeneity of a clustering solution often results in decreasing its completeness. Consider, two degenerate clustering solutions. In one, assigning every datapoint into a single cluster, guarantees perfect completeness — all of the data points that are members of the same class are trivially elements of the same cluster. However, this cluster is as *unhomogeneous* as possible, since all classes are included in this single cluster. In another solution, assigning each data point to a distinct cluster guarantees perfect homogeneity — each cluster trivially contains only members of a single class. However, in terms of completeness, this solution scores very poorly, unless indeed each class contains only a single member. We define the distance from a perfect clustering is measured as the weighted harmonic mean of measures of homogeneity and completeness.

Two commonly used external measures for assessing clustering success are *Purity* and *Entropy* (Zhao and Karypis, 2001), defined as,

$$Purity = \sum_{r=1}^k \frac{1}{n} \max_i(n_r^i)$$

$$Entropy = \sum_{r=1}^k \frac{n_r}{n} \left(-\frac{1}{\log q} \sum_{i=1}^q \frac{n_r^i}{n_r} \log \frac{n_r^i}{n_r} \right)$$

where q is the number of classes, k the number of clusters, n_r is the size of cluster r , and n_r^i is the number of data points in class i clustered in cluster r .

Both these approaches represent plausible ways to evaluate the homogeneity of a clustering solution. However, our completeness criterion is not measured at all by these metrics. That is, they do not address the question of whether all members of a given class are included in a single cluster. Therefore the *Purity* and *Entropy* metrics are likely to improve (increased *Purity*, decreased *Entropy*) monotonically with the number of clusters in the result, up

to a degenerate maximum where there are as many clusters as data points. However, clustering solutions rated high by either metric may still be far from ideal.

Another frequently used external clustering evaluation measure is commonly referred to as “clustering accuracy”. The calculation of this accuracy is inspired by the information retrieval metric of F-Measure (Van Rijsbergen, 1979). The formula for this clustering F-measure as described in (Fung et al., 2003) is shown in Figure 2.

Let N be the number of data points, C the set of classes, K the set of clusters and n_{ij} be the number of members of class $c_i \in C$ that are elements of cluster $k_j \in K$.

$$F(C, K) = \sum_{c_i \in C} \frac{|c_i|}{N} \max_{k_j \in K} \{F(c_i, k_j)\} \quad (1)$$

$$F(c_i, k_j) = \frac{2 * R(c_i, k_j) * P(c_i, k_j)}{R(c_i, k_j) + P(c_i, k_j)}$$

$$R(c_i, k_j) = \frac{n_{ij}}{|c_i|}$$

$$P(c_i, k_j) = \frac{n_{ij}}{|k_j|}$$

Figure 1: Calculation of clustering F-measure

This metric has a significant advantage over *Purity* and *Entropy*, in that it does measure both the homogeneity and the completeness of a clustering solution. Recall is calculated as the portion of items from class i that are present in cluster j , thus measuring how complete cluster j is with respect to class i . Similarly, Precision is calculated as the portion of cluster j that is a member of class i , thus measuring how homogenous cluster j is with respect to class i .

Like some other external cluster evaluation techniques (misclassification index (MI) (Zeng et al., 2002), H (Meila and Heckerman, 2001), L (Larsen and Aone, 1999), D (van Dongen, 2000)), F-measure relies on a post-processing step in which each cluster is assigned to a class. These techniques share certain problems. First, they calculate the goodness not only of the given clustering solution, but also of the cluster-class matching. Therefore, in order for the goodness of two clustering solutions to be compared using one these metrics, an identical post-processing algorithm must be used. This problem can be trivially addressed by fixing the class-cluster matching function and including it in the def-

inition of the measure as in H . However, a second and more critical problem is the “problem of matching” (Meila, 2006). In calculating the similarity between a hypothesized clustering and a ‘true’ clustering, these measures only consider the contributions from those clusters that are matched to a true set. The unmatched portion of each cluster is not evaluated in the distance function. This is a major problem, as two significantly different clusterings can result in identical scores.

A second class of clustering evaluation techniques is based on a combinatorial approach which examines the number of pairs of data points that are clustered similarly in the target and hypothesized clustering. That is, each pair of points can either be 1) clustered together in both clusterings (N_{11}), 2) clustered separately in both clusterings (N_{00}), 3) clustered together in the hypothesized but not the target clustering (N_{01}) or 4) clustered together in the target but not in the hypothesized clustering (N_{10}). Based on these 4 values, a number of measures have been proposed, including Rand Index (Rand, 1971), Adjusted Rand Index (Hubert and Arabie, 1985), Γ statistic (Hubert and Schultz, 1976), Jaccard (Milligan et al., 1983), Fowlkes-Mallows (Fowlkes and Mallows, 1983) and Mirkin (Mirkin, 1996). We illustrate this class of metrics with the calculation of Rand Index. $Rand(C, K) = \frac{N_{11} + N_{00}}{n(n-1)/2}$ Rand Index can be interpreted as the probability that a pair of points is clustered similarly (together or separately) in C and K .

Meila (2006) describes a number of potential problems of this class of measures posed by (Fowlkes and Mallows, 1983) and (Wallace, 1983). The most basic is that these metrics tend not to vary over the interval of $[0, 1]$. Transformations like those applied by the adjusted Rand Index and a minor adjustment to the Mirkin measure (see Section 4) can address this problem. However, pair matching metrics also suffer from distributional problems. The baseline for Fowlkes-Mallows varies significantly between 0.6 and 0 when the ratio of data points to clusters is greater than 3 — thus including nearly all real-world clustering problems. Similarly, the Adjusted Rand Index, as demonstrated using Monte Carlo simulations in (Fowlkes and Mallows, 1983), varies from 0.5 to 0.95. This variance in the metric’s baseline prompts Meila to ask if the assumption

of linearity following normalization can be maintained. That is, if the behavior of the metric is so unstable before normalization can users reasonably expect stable behavior **following** normalization?

A final class of cluster evaluation measures are based on information theory. These measures analyze the distribution of class and cluster membership in order to determine how successful a given clustering solution is or how different two partitions of a data set are. We have already examined one member of this class of measures, *Entropy*. From a coding theory perspective, *Entropy* is the weighted average of the code lengths of each cluster. Our V-measure is a member of this class of clustering metrics.

One significant advantage that information theoretic evaluation measures have is that they provide an elegant solution to the “problem of matching”. By examining the relative sizes of the classes and clusters being evaluated, these measures all evaluate the entire membership of each cluster — not just a ‘matched’ portion.

Dom’s Q_0 measure (Dom, 2001) uses conditional entropy, $H(C|K)$ to calculate the goodness of a clustering solution. That is, given the hypothesized partition, what is the number of bits necessary to represent the true clustering?

$$Q_0(C, K) = H(C|K) + \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{|K|} \log \left(\frac{h(k) + |C| - 1}{|C| - 1} \right) \quad (2)$$

If $C = K$, $H(C|K) = 0$. However, this term — like the *Purity* and *Entropy* measures — only evaluates the homogeneity of a solution. To measure the completeness of the hypothesized clustering, Dom includes a model cost term calculated using a coding theory argument. The overall clustering quality measure presented is the sum of the costs of representing the data ($H(C|K)$) and the model. The motivation for this approach is an appeal to parsimony: Given identical conditional entropies, $H(C|K)$, the clustering solution with the fewest clusters should be preferred.

Another information-based clustering measure is variation of information (*VI*) (Meila, 2006), $VI(C, K) = H(C|K) + H(K|C)$. *VI* is presented as a distance metric for comparing partitions (or clusterings) of the same data. It therefore does not

distinguish between hypothesized and target clusterings. VI has a number of useful properties. First, it satisfies the metric axioms. This quality allows users to intuitively understand how VI values combine and relate to one another. Secondly, it is “convexly additive”. That is to say, if a cluster is split, the distance from the new cluster to the original is the distance induced by the split times the size of the cluster. This property guarantees that all changes to the metric are “local”: the impact of splitting or merging clusters is limited to only those clusters involved, and its size is relative to the size of these clusters. Third, VI is n -invariant: the number of data points in the cluster do not affect the value of the measure. VI depends on the relative sizes of the partitions of C and K , not on the number of points in these partitions. However, VI is bounded by the maximum number of clusters in C or K , k^* . Without manual modification however, $k^* = n$, where each cluster contains only a single data point. Thus, while technically n -invariant, the possible values of VI are heavily dependent on the number of data points being clustered. Thus, it is difficult to compare VI values across data sets and clustering algorithms without fixing k^* , as VI will vary over different ranges. It is a trivial modification to modify VI such that it varies over $[0,1]$. Normalizing, VI by $\log n$ or $1/2 \log k^*$ guarantee this range. However, Meila (2006) raises two potential problems with this modification. The normalization should not be applied if data sets of different sizes are to be compared — it negates the n -invariance of the metric. Additionally, if two authors apply the latter normalization and do not use the same value for k^* , their results will not be comparable.

3 V-Measure and Its Calculation

V-measure is an entropy-based metric which explicitly measures how successfully the criteria of homogeneity and completeness have been satisfied. V-measure is computed as the harmonic mean of distinct homogeneity and completeness scores, just as precision and recall are commonly combined into F-measure (Van Rijsbergen, 1979). As F-measure scores can be weighted, V-measure can be weighted to favor the contributions of homogeneity or completeness.

For the purposes of the following discussion, as-

sume N data points, a set of classes, $C = \{c_i | i = 1, \dots, n\}$ and a set of clusters, $K = \{k_i | i = 1, \dots, m\}$. Let A be the contingency table produced by the clustering algorithm representing the clustering solution, such that $A = a_{ij}$ such that a_{ij} is the number of data points that are members of class c_i and elements of cluster k_j .

Homogeneity:

In order to satisfy our homogeneity criteria, a clustering must assign **only** those datapoints that are members of a single class to a single cluster. That is, the class distribution within each cluster should be skewed to a single class, that is, zero entropy. We determine how close a given clustering is to this ideal by examining the conditional entropy of the class distribution given the proposed clustering. In the perfectly homogeneous case, this value, $H(C|K)$, is 0. However, in an imperfect situation, the size of this value, in bits, is dependent on the size of the dataset. Therefore, instead of taking the raw conditional entropy, we normalize this value by the maximum reduction in entropy the clustering information could provide, specifically, $H(C, K)$.¹

Note that $H(C|K)$ is maximal when the clustering provides no new information — the class distribution within each cluster is even. $H(C|K)$ is 0 when each cluster contains only members of a single class, a perfectly homogenous clustering. In the degenerate case where $H(C, K) = 0$ we defined both homogeneity and completeness to be 1. For a perfectly homogenous solution, this normalization, $\frac{H(C|K)}{H(C, K)}$, equals 0. Thus, to adhere to the convention of 1 being desirable and 0 undesirable, we define homogeneity as:

$$h = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } H(C, K) = 0 \\ 1 - \frac{H(C|K)}{H(C, K)} & \text{else} \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} H(C|K) &= - \sum_{k=1}^{|K|} \sum_{c=1}^{|C|} \frac{A_{ck}}{N} \log \frac{A_{ck}}{\sum_{c=1}^{|C|} A_{ck}} \\ H(C, K) &= - \sum_{k=1}^{|K|} \sum_{c=1}^{|C|} \frac{A_{ck}}{N} \log \frac{A_{ck}}{N} \end{aligned}$$

¹This is a weak upper bound, $H(C|K) \leq H(C) \leq H(C, K)$. However, normalization by $H(C)$ yields a measure that behaves in unintuitive, and undesirable ways.

Completeness:

Completeness is symmetrical to homogeneity. In order to satisfy the completeness criteria, a clustering must assign **all** of those datapoints that are members of a single class to a single cluster. To evaluate completeness, we examine the distribution of cluster assignments within each class. In a perfectly complete clustering solution, each of these distributions will be completely skewed to a single cluster. We can evaluate this degree of skew by calculating the conditional entropy of the proposed cluster distribution given the class of the component datapoints, $H(K|C)$. In the perfectly complete case, $H(K|C) = 0$. However, in the worst case scenario, each class is equally represented by every cluster where $H(K|C)$ is maximal. Therefore, symmetrically to the calculation above, we define completeness as:

$$c = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } H(K, C) = 0 \\ 1 - \frac{H(K|C)}{H(K, C)} & \text{else} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} H(K|C) &= - \sum_{c=1}^{|C|} \sum_{k=1}^{|K|} \frac{A_{ck}}{N} \log \frac{A_{ck}}{\sum_{k=1}^{|K|} A_{ck}} \\ H(K, C) &= H(C, K) \end{aligned}$$

Based upon these calculations of homogeneity and completeness, we then calculate a clustering solution's V-measure by computing the weighted harmonic mean of homogeneity and completeness, $V_\beta = \frac{(1+\beta)*h*c}{(\beta*h)+c}$. Similarly to the familiar F-measure, if β is greater than 1 completeness is weighted more strongly in the calculation, if β is less than 1, homogeneity is weighted more strongly.

Notice that the computations of homogeneity, completeness and V-measure are completely independent of the number of classes, the number of clusters, the size of the data set and the clustering algorithm used. Thus these metrics can be applied to and compared across any clustering solution, regardless of the number of data points (n-invariance), the number of classes or the number of clusters. Moreover, by calculating homogeneity and completeness separately, a more precise evaluation of the performance of the clustering can be obtained.

We believe that V-measure provides two significant advantages over Q_0 that make it a more useful diagnostic tool. First, Q_0 does not explicitly calculate the degree of completeness of the clustering solution. The cost term captures some of this information, since a partition with fewer clusters is likely to be more complete than a clustering solution with more clusters. However, Q_0 does not explicitly address the interaction between the conditional entropy and the cost of representing the model. While this is an application of the *minimum description length* (MDL) principle (Rissanen, 1978; Rissanen, 1989), it does not provide an intuitive manner for assessing our two competing criteria of homogeneity and completeness. That is, at what point does an increase in conditional entropy (homogeneity) justify a reduction in the number of clusters (completeness).

While VI has a number of very useful distance properties when analyzing a single data set across a number of settings, it has limited utility as a general purpose clustering evaluation metric for use across disparate clusterings of disparate data sets. Our homogeneity (h) and completeness (c) terms both range over $[0,1]$ and are completely n -invariant and k^* -invariant. Furthermore, measuring each as a ratio of bit lengths has greater intuitive appeal than a more opportunistic normalization.

V-measure has another advantage as a clustering evaluation measure over VI and Q_0 . By evaluating homogeneity and completeness in a symmetrical, complementary manner, the calculation of V-measure makes their relationship clearly observable. Separate analyses of homogeneity and completeness are not possible with any other cluster evaluation measure. Moreover, by using the harmonic mean to combine homogeneity and completeness, V-measure is unique in that it can also prioritize one criterion over another, depending on the clustering task and goals.

4 Comparing Evaluation Measures

Dom (2001) describes a parametric technique for generating example clustering solutions. He then proceeds to define five "desirable properties" that clustering accuracy measures should display, based on the parameters used to generate the clustering solution. To compare V-measure more directly to al-

ternative clustering metrics, we evaluate V-measure and other metrics against these and two additional desirable properties.

The parameters used in generating a clustering solution are as follows.

- $|C|$ The number of classes
- $|K|$ The number of clusters
- $|K_{noise}|$ Number of “noise” clusters; $|K_{noise}| < |K|$
- $|C_{noise}|$ Number of “noise” classes; $|C_{noise}| < |C|$
- ϵ Error probability; $\epsilon = \epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 + \epsilon_3$.
- ϵ_1 The error mass within “useful” class-cluster pairs
- ϵ_2 The error mass within noise clusters
- ϵ_3 The error mass within noise classes

The construction of a clustering solution begins with a matching of “useful” clusters to “useful” classes². There are $|K_u| = |K| - |K_{noise}|$ “useful” clusters and $|C_u| = |C| - |C_{noise}|$ “useful” classes. The claim is useful classes and clusters are matched to each other and matched pairs contain more data points than unmatched pairs. Probability mass of $1 - \epsilon$ is evenly distributed across each match. Error mass of ϵ_1 is evenly distributed across each pair of non-matching useful class/cluster pairs. Noise clusters are those that contain data points equally from each cluster. Error mass of ϵ_2 is distributed across every “noise”-cluster/ “useful”-class pair. We extend the parameterization technique described in (Dom, 2001) in with $|C_{noise}|$ and ϵ_3 . Noise classes are those that contain data points equally from each cluster. Error mass of ϵ_3 is distributed across every cluster/“noise”-class pair. An example solution, along with its generating parameters is given in Figure 2.

The desirable properties proposed by Dom are given as P1-P5 in Table 1. We include two additional properties (P6,P7) relating the examined measure value to the number of ‘noise’ classes and ϵ_3 .

To evaluate how different clustering metrics satisfy each of these properties, we systematically varied each parameter, keeping $|C| = 5$ fixed.

²The operation of this matching is omitted in the interest of space. Interested readers should see (Dom, 2001).

	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_{noise1}
K_1	33	33	6	9
K_2	6	6	33	9
K_{noise1}	12	12	12	9

Figure 2: Sample parametric clustering solution with $n = 180$, $|K| = 3$, $|K_{noise}| = 1$, $|C| = 3$, $|C_{noise}| = 1$, $\epsilon_1 = .1$, $\epsilon_2 = .2$, $\epsilon_3 = .15$

- $|K_u|$: 10 values: 2, 3, ..., 11
- $|K_{noise}|$: 7 values: 0, 1, ..., 6
- $|C_{noise}|$: 7 values: 0, 1, ..., 6
- ϵ_1 : 4 values: 0, 0.066, 0.133, 0.2
- ϵ_2 : 4 values: 0, 0.1, 0.2, 0.3
- ϵ_3 : 4 values: 0, 0.1, 0.2, 0.3

We evaluated the behavior of V-Measure, Rand, Mirkin, Fowlkes-Mallows, Gamma, Jaccard, VI³, Q_0 , Entropy, F-Measure against the desirable properties P1-P7. Based on the described systematic modification of each parameter, only V-measure, VI and Q_0 empirically satisfy all of P1-P7 in all experimental conditions.

All evaluated measures satisfy P4. However, Rand, Mirkin, Fowlkes-Mallows, Gamma, Jaccard and F-Measure all fail to satisfy P3 and P6 in at least one experimental configuration. This indicates that the number of ‘noise’ classes or clusters can be increased without reducing any of these measures.

³The inequalities in the desirable properties are inverted in the evaluation of VI as it is a distance measure, not an evaluation measure.

- P1** For $|K_u| < |C|$ and $\Delta|K_u| \leq (|C| - |K_u|)$, $\frac{\Delta M}{\Delta|K_u|} > 0$
- P2** For $|K_u| \geq |C|$, $\frac{\Delta M}{\Delta|K_u|} < 0$
- P3** $\frac{\Delta M}{\Delta|K_{noise}|} < 0$
- P4** $\frac{\delta M}{\delta \epsilon_1} \leq 0$, with equality only if $|K_u| = 1$
- P5** $\frac{\delta M}{\delta \epsilon_2} \leq 0$, with equality only if $|K_{noise}| = 0$
- P6** $\frac{\Delta M}{\Delta|C_{noise}|} < 0$
- P7** $\frac{\delta M}{\delta \epsilon_3} \leq 0$, with equality only if $|C_{noise}| = 0$

Table 1: Desirable Properties of a cluster evaluation measure M

This implies a computational obliviousness to potentially significant aspects of an evaluated clustering solution. Moreover, Rand, Mirkin fail to satisfy P1, P2, P5 and P7. F-Measure also fails to satisfy P5 and P7.

5 Applying V-measure

In this section, we present two clustering experiments. We describe a document clustering experiment and evaluate its results using V-measure, highlighting the interaction between homogeneity and completeness. Second, we present a pitch accent type clustering experiment. We present results from both of these experiments in order to show how V-measure can be used to draw comparisons across data sets and clustering algorithms.

5.1 Document Clustering

Clustering techniques have been used widely to sort documents into topic clusters. We reproduce such an experiment here to demonstrate the usefulness of V-measure. Using a subset of the TDT-4 corpus (Strassel and Glenn, 2003) (1884 English news wire and broadcast news documents manually labeled with one of 12 topics), we ran clustering experiments using k-means clustering (McQueen, 1967) and average-linkage hierarchical clustering (Johnson, 1967). The topics and relative distributions are as follows: Acts of Violence/War (22.3%), Elections (14.4%), Diplomatic Meetings (12.9%), Accidents (8.75%), Natural Disasters (7.4%), Human Interest (6.7%), Scandals (6.5%), Legal Cases (6.4%), Miscellaneous (5.3%), Sports (4.7%), New Laws (3.2%), Science and Discovery (1.4%).

We employed stemmed, tf*idf-weighted term vectors extracted for each document as the clustering space for these experiments, which yielded a very high dimension space. To reduce this dimensionality, we performed a simple feature selection procedure including in the feature vector only those terms that represented the highest tf*idf value for at least one data point. This resulted in a feature vector containing 484 tf*idf values for each document. Results for average-linkage hierarchical cluster are shown in Figure 3. Results from both k-means and average linkage are shown in Figure 4.

In figure 3, the relationship between homogeneity and completeness is clearly observable. As the number of clusters increase, we see homogeneity in-

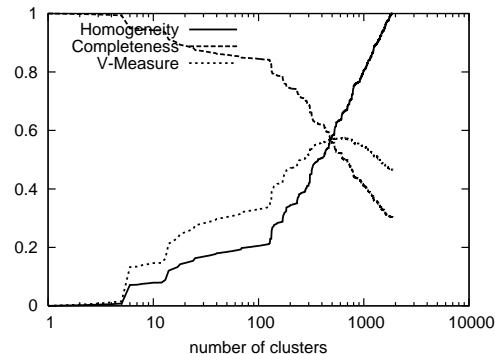


Figure 3: Results of document clustering measured by V-Measure, homogeneity and completeness

creasing while completeness decreases. V-measure, in this case, is maximal approximately at the point in which the two cross. With clustering F-measure (see section 2), precision and recall scores could be used to see the relationship between homogeneity and completeness, however, due to the problem of matching, we found these scores to frequently be insensitive to changes in the number of clusters. Obviously, this relationship would not be observable if evaluating with those measures that do not evaluate completeness. VI and Q_0 both have a tendency to increase with the number of clusters, limiting their use in evaluating clustering solutions with varied values of k .

5.2 Pitch Accent Clustering

Pitch accent is how speakers of many languages make a word intonational prominent. In most pitch accent languages, words can also be accented in different ways to convey different meanings (Hirschberg, 2002). In the ToBI labeling conventions for Standard American English (Silverman et al., 1992), for example, there are five different accent types (H^* , L^* , $H+!H^*$, $L+H^*$, L^*+H).

We extracted a number of acoustic features from accented words within the read portion of the Boston Directions Corpus (BDC) (Nakatani et al., 1995) and examined how well clustering in these acoustic dimensions correlates to manually annotated pitch accent types. We obtained a very skewed distribution, with a majority of H^* pitch accents.⁴ We there-

⁴Pitch accents containing a high tone may also be downstepped, or spoken in a compressed pitch range. Here we collapsed all DOWNSTEPPED instances of each pitch accent with

fore included only a randomly selected 10% sample of H* accents, providing a more even distribution of pitch accent types for clustering: H* (54.4%), L*(32.1%), L+H* (26.5%), L*+H (2.8%), H+!H* (2.1%).

We extracted ten acoustic features from each accented word to serve as the clustering space for this experiment. Using Praat’s (Boersma, 2001) Get Pitch (ac)... function, we calculated the mean F0 and $\Delta F0$, as well as z-score speaker normalized versions of the same. We included in the feature vector the relative location of the maximum pitch value in the word as well as the distance between this maximum and the point of maximum intensity. Finally, we calculated the raw and speaker normalized slope from the start of the word to the maximum pitch, and from the maximum pitch to the end of the word.

Using this feature vector, we performed k-means clustering and average-linkage hierarchical clustering and evaluate how successfully these dimensions represent differences between pitch accent types. The resulting V-measure calculations are shown in Figure 4. To illustrate how clustering from different domains might be compared, we also include V-measures for document clustering, again for both k-means and average linkage clustering methods. In

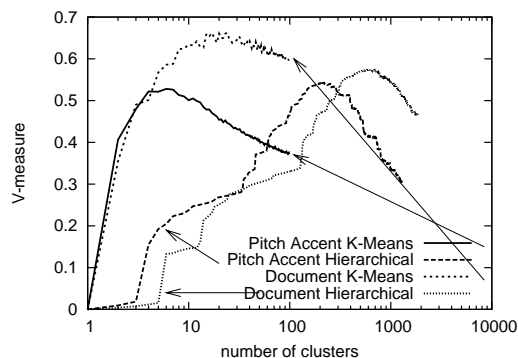


Figure 4: Clustering experiment results

figure 4 we are able to compare results across the two clustering algorithms – k-means and hierarchical – as well as across data sets of different sizes and class distributions. We can observe similar trends in the behavior of the clustering algorithms across data sets. K-means tend to achieve an optimal clustering with fewer clusters than the agglomerative clustering approach. Moreover, on the document clustering task, this maximum is considerably higher than the maximum yielded by the agglomerative approach. However, while k-means yields a maxima with fewer clusters on the pitch accent type classification task as well, this maxima is lower than that found with more clusters via hierarchical clustering. While, neither approach to either classification task shows overwhelming success – these are naïve feature spaces and algorithms – these examples allow us to observe how transparently V-measure can be used to compare the behavior of different clustering algorithms on distinct data sets.

6 Conclusion

We have presented a new external cluster evaluation metric, V-measure, and compared it with existing clustering evaluation measures. V-measure is based upon two criteria for clustering usefulness, homogeneity and completeness, which capture a clustering solution’s success in including all and only data-points from a given class in a given cluster. We have also demonstrated V-measure’s usefulness in comparing clustering success across different clustering techniques and across different domains by evaluating document and pitch accent clustering solutions.

We believe that V-measure addresses some of the problems that affect other cluster measures. 1) It evaluates a clustering solution independent of the clustering algorithm, size of the data set, number of classes and number of clusters. 2) It does not require its user to map each cluster to a class. Therefore, it only evaluates the quality of the clustering, not a post-hoc class-cluster mapping. 3) It evaluates the clustering of every data point, avoiding the “problem of matching”. 4) By evaluating the criteria of both homogeneity and completeness, V-measure is more comprehensive than those that evaluate only one. 5) Moreover, by evaluating these criteria separately and explicitly, V-measure can serve as an elegant diagnostic tool providing greater insight into clustering behavior.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Martin Jansche, Sasha Blair-Goldensohn and Kapil Thadani for their insights and feedback. This work was funded in part by the DARPA GALE program under a subcontract to SRI International.

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